LOWER SALFORD TOWNSHIP

COMMERCIAL & MIXED USE
DESIGN GUIDE

Designing our Future to Celebrate Our Past

May 2012

Board of Supervisors

Douglas A. Gifford, Chairman

Douglas Johnson, Vice-Chairman

Philip P. Heilman

Keith A. Bergman

Christopher Canavan

LOWER SALFORD TOWNSHIP

COMMERCIAL & MIXED USE
DESIGN GUIDE

Designing our Future to Celebrate Our Past

Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

Table of Contents

Introduction 1

Historic Lower Salford 1

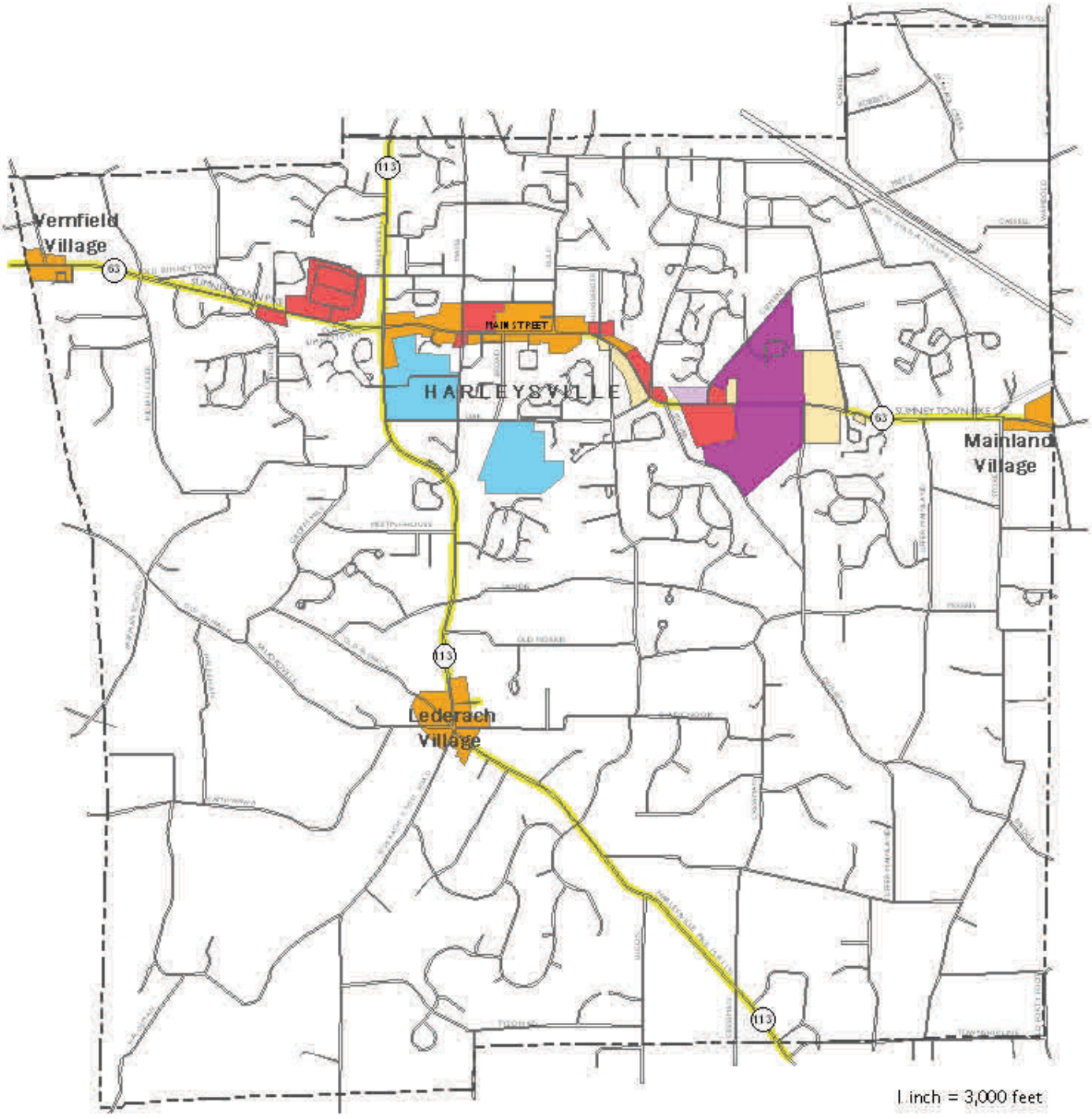
Essential Elements of Lower Salford Style 5

Design Intent 7

Site Layout 9

Building Design

- Scale and Massing 11
- Roofs 13
- Walls & Windows 15
- Architectural Style 17
- Materials 18



Recommended Areas for Design Guidelines

- Administrative Office Zoning
- Mixed Use Zoning
- Commercial Zoning
- Village Commercial Zoning
- Office-Limited Commercial Zoning
- Residential Office Zoning
- Commercial Corridors

N

Lower Salford Township
Commercial & Mixed Use Areas

Introduction

Lower Salford Township developed this Design Guide manual with assistance from the Montgomery County Planning Commission to provide specific guidance for developers of commercial and mixed-use projects in the villages of Harleysville, Mainland, Lederach, and Vernfield, and along the Route 113, Route 63, and Old Route 63/Mainland Road commercial corridors. The Design Guide provides recommended design standards to support the regulatory Zoning Code, with images of Lower Salford's existing vernacular architecture and examples of the types of new development the township hopes to encourage.

WHO SHOULD USE THE DESIGN GUIDE?

The Design Guide was created to assist developers, including their designers, architects, planners, engineers, and real estate advisors, as they generate their proposals for review by the Township. Ideally, the applicant and their team will develop a sketch plan and conceptual designs for their project using these recommendations, and present their proposal to the Township for an informal review prior to submitting a formal land development application.

The Design Guide is also a tool for the township's staff, appointed boards, and elected officials to use when reviewing applications. In instances where the Township Zoning Code requires architecture "that is consistent with the historic village character," this Guide provides graphic illustrations of that character, using photographs of the existing villages, to help the township determine whether a proposal is meeting the intent of the Zoning Code. This guide is also intended to assist in the review of re-zoning, variance, conditional use, and special exception applications.

IS "GOOD DESIGN" A REQUIREMENT?

This manual is intended to provide recommendations and guidance for new development, not requirements. The Zoning and Subdivision and Land Development Codes of Lower Salford Township are the township's regulatory tools, and they continue to apply to all development in the Township. In some cases, the township codes may reference the Design Guide, in which case the regulatory requirements set forth in the code shall also apply (for instance, some uses may require that certain standards in this Guide be met for Conditional Use approval).

Historic Lower Salford

Lower Salford Township was settled in the late Colonial period, around the time of William Penn's arrival in 1682, mainly by immigrants from Germany, Switzerland, and Holland. The original settlers of the area were from a rural, agricultural background, and many were of the Mennonite faith. The resulting early architecture of the area is distinctly rural Pennsylvania-German, and much of the later development of the area has retained that simple, functional, agricultural style. Many examples of Lower Salford's earliest buildings survive today, including meetinghouses,

Bergey Mill Farmstead historic site, Lederach, PA

Heckler Plains Farmstead historic site, Harleysville, PA

Lower Salford Township Municipal Building entrance, Harleysville, PA

Bergey Mill Farmstead historic site, Lederach, PA

Jacob Reiff Homestead historic site, Harleysville, PA

school houses, farmhouses, barns, and even some colonial-era inns. The Township has preserved several historic homesteads as parks and cultural sites, and the Lower Salford Historical Society and other local groups continue to keep the history of the area alive today.

Like many of the towns in the outlying suburbs of Philadelphia, Harleysville and the smaller villages in Lower Salford became important centers of commerce, with inns, taverns, shops, general stores, craftsmen, and mills springing up to serve the local farm economy and growing population. These early buildings in the township are built of wood and locally-quarried stone, sometimes covered in white stucco, and are mostly two- and three-story rectangular buildings with simple gable roofs.

Souderton-Harleysville Pike (Route 113) and Sumneytown Pike (Route 63), the main thoroughfares through the township, still retain much of the architecture spanning the centuries of the township's development. This history includes the growth of manufacturing, banking, and insurance in the Victorian era and early 1900's, and the tandem growth of housing in the villages during this time. Many of these later buildings were built of locally-manufactured red brick, and were often adorned with more ornate detailing typical of the Victorian, Greek Revival, Gothic, and Colonial Revival styles popular at that time.

It is this rich history, and this spirit of preservation, that inspired the architectural and site design guidelines found in this manual. It is the hope of the township and its residents that any new development, particularly along its main streets, will complement and highlight this history and continue to promote the distinctly Pennsylvania-German heritage of the area.

Examples of historic farms in the Lower Salford countryside (above)

The Lederach Corner Store Tea Room, a local landmark (above left); examples of historic residential architecture on Main Street in Mainland and Harleysville (above center and bottom left); and an old stone inn on Main Street (bottom right).

Historic Inn, Mainland, PA

20th century homes on Main Street, Harleysville, PA

Essential Elements of Lower Salford Style

- Rural “Pennsylvania German” Farm Buildings
- Victorian, Revival, and Arts & Crafts Style Homes
- Pitched Roofs
- Porches and Porticos
- Traditional detailing, including window mullions, columns, & trim
- Barn red
- Red brick building
- Local quarried stone block and fieldstone
- White or tan trim, stucco, and clapboard siding

Office building constructed in 1990 in Lederach fits into the historic crossroads village

Historic home converted to office building, Vernfield Village

Business use in a converted historic barn, Main Street, Harleysville

Design Intent

The overall intent of these design guidelines is to **promote new development that is consistent with the historic and traditional character of Lower Salford Township, and further to:**

- Provide for a consistent character of nonresidential development along the major thoroughfares in Lower Salford Township: Sumneytown Pike / Main Street (Route 63) and Harleysville-Souderton Pike (Route 113).
- Ensure that commercial uses have a character that is compatible with and reflects elements of existing historic homes, farm buildings, inns, mills, and shops in Lower Salford Township.
- Minimize the visual bulk of large commercial buildings so that they fit into the village environs.
- Provide commercial areas that are pedestrian-oriented, accessible to neighboring residential areas by bicycle and by foot, and that minimize the visual impact of large parking areas.

Eagleview Town Center, Exton, PA

Central green at Woodmont, Huntingdon Valley , PA

Commercial buildings should be oriented toward Route 63 or Route 113, with parking located to the side or rear of the buildings.

Commercial uses (retail, office, etc.) on a mixed-use site should be oriented toward the frontage of the property and toward the main street internal to the site, creating a pedestrian-friendly streetscape on both frontages. Parking should be located to the rear and side of the buildings, not directly adjacent to the street frontages.

Retail front facades should be highlighted with appropriate architectural accents , signage, and landscaping so that they promote a walkable environment and improve the quality of life for neighboring residential areas.

Eagleview Town Center, Exton, PA

This new town center includes a mix of uses, traditional streetscape, and integrated sidewalks and open space..

Richmond Square/Wetherburn Commons, Manheim, PA

Site Layout

1. Commercial front façades should be oriented to Route 63 or Route 113, and/or to a new main street internal to the development.
2. Commercial uses should be grouped together, with direct frontage on streets, and directly connected to residential areas with wide, landscaped sidewalk corridors and streetscapes.
3. The fronts of commercial buildings should be framed by appropriate landscaping and signage.
4. Front doors should be marked by an appropriate, covered architectural element such as a canopy, porch roof, or archway, both to protect pedestrians from the elements and to provide a traditional building character.
5. Buildings located at a corner should have their entrance at the corner, and should be marked by an appropriate, covered architectural element.
6. Parking should be located to the side or rear of the buildings.
7. Residential garages should be located to the side or rear of the homes.
8. Mixed Use developments should have integrated plazas and green spaces, a seamless sidewalk network, interconnected streets, and a central green that serves both the residential and the non-residential areas of the community.

An arcade with pitched roof creates a pedestrian-scaled element in a shopping center building.

Fairview Village, Worcester, PA

First floor awnings and second stories, along with material and roof height changes break up the mass of this strip of commercial uses.

Exton Town Center, Chester County, PA

Traditional architectural details and design reduce the bulk of this bank building.

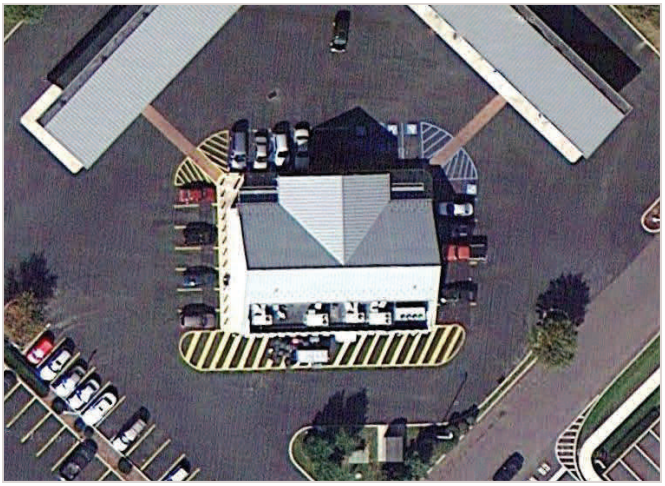
Building Design
Scale & Massing

1. Buildings with a footprint greater than 3,000 square feet should be designed to have the appearance of several smaller attached buildings, or a main building with additions, using jogs in the façade and roofline changes.

2. As an alternative to 2.A. above, buildings larger than 3,000 square feet in footprint may be designed to resemble a traditional barn structure, provided a second story or faux second story is included and a pitched roof is used.

3. Single story buildings are discouraged, and when they are used they should be designed to have the appearance of a two-story structure, with windows, dormers, clerestory windows, or other architectural elements indicating a second story.

4. Buildings with a footprint greater than 8,000 square feet should be designed with pedestrian-scaled elements to the greatest extent possible, to minimize the overall bulk of such large buildings, and building massing should be broken up using façade breaks, roofline changes, arcades and porches with pitched roofs, and other architectural design elements.



This convenience store, which is about 4,500 square feet, uses a pitched roof that is designed to conceal HVAC equipment mounted on the roof.

Ridge Pike, Royersford, PA

Flat roofs may be used on larger buildings when they are consistent with the use of a historic architectural style, as on the Italianate building shown here. Sloped awnings help soften the façade and add a pedestrian-scaled element.

Skippack Village, Skippack, PA

Pitched roofs, dormers, and a cupola , along with small jogs in the façade, awnings, and streetside landscaping, help this commercial building fit into a walkable village environment.

Haverford Plaza, Haverford, PA

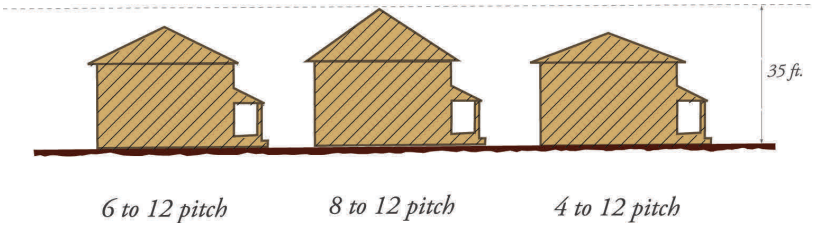
A pitched roof can vastly improve the appearance of a building such as the Taco Bell fast food shop shown here.

Arlington, VA

Pitched roofs can provide a traditional look even on "big box" stores, particularly if the roof is broken up with dormers and jogs in roof height. Awnings over the front entrance add a pedestrian scale element to the façade.

Concordville Town Center, Glen Mills, PA

Roofs



1. All non-residential buildings should have a pitched roof covering at least 75% of the roof area with a minimum pitch of 6 vertical inches to every 12 horizontal inches (6:12). A steeper pitch of 8:12 is preferred; a pitch of not less than 4:12 may be acceptable on much larger buildings. Pitched roofs should provide overhanging eaves that extend a minimum of 12 inches beyond the building wall on all sides. Large roof areas should be broken up with dormers and steps.

2. Dormers are encouraged whenever feasible and compatible with the overall building design.

3. Flat roof areas may be provided for HVAC equipment, provided the pitched roof area is large enough to hide the equipment and avoid a "faux" roof appearance.

4. Flat roofs may be acceptable on buildings with footprints greater than 8,000 square feet, provided other recommendations herein are used to reduce the overall scale and bulk of the building, and pedestrian-scaled elements are used. Flat roofs should convey a style that is compatible with Lower Salford's historic vernacular architecture, for example on a Victorian Italianate style building.

CVS
pharmacy

MAIN STREET
JAVA

ECKERD
PHARMACY

BARNES & NOBLE
BOOKSELLERS

Walls & Windows

1. Blank walls should not be located along any visible exterior wall facing a street, parking area, open space or walking area. Blank walls are only acceptable on a rear façade when the rear of the building is not used for parking or pedestrian access and is fully screened from view of neighboring properties.

2. All visible exterior walls not meeting the criteria for blank walls in (A) above should have the same architectural styling and detailing as the front façade, including consistent styles, materials, colors, and details.

3. Exterior walls should include breaks every 40-60', or wherever feasible given interior space layout, in order to reduce the overall bulk of larger building masses. Bay windows, porches, porticos, building extensions, etc., may be used to achieve with the façade break.

4. The ground floor and upper floor(s) of all visible exterior walls not meeting the criteria for blank walls in (A) above should contain windows meeting the following standards:

    - Ground floor front facades of retail commercial uses, personal service businesses, and restaurants should consist of at least 30% window area, but not more than 75% window area, with views provided through these windows into the business.

    - Ground floor front facades of buildings with footprints greater than 8,000 square feet should include at least one clear window area on each side of the main entrance, a glassed entry foyer area, or a similar clear glass area affording views into the building.

    - Windows and doors on front and side facades should not be tinted dark, mirrored, or otherwise covered with opaque materials such as signage. Three-dimensional window displays are acceptable, provided at least 40% of the total window and door area on any given façade is transparent and not blocked by the display.

Examples of Architectural Styles and Details

Architectural Style

1. New commercial retail and mixed use buildings should be designed to be compatible with the historic and vernacular styles currently existing in the Township. Typical styles found in Lower Salford include:

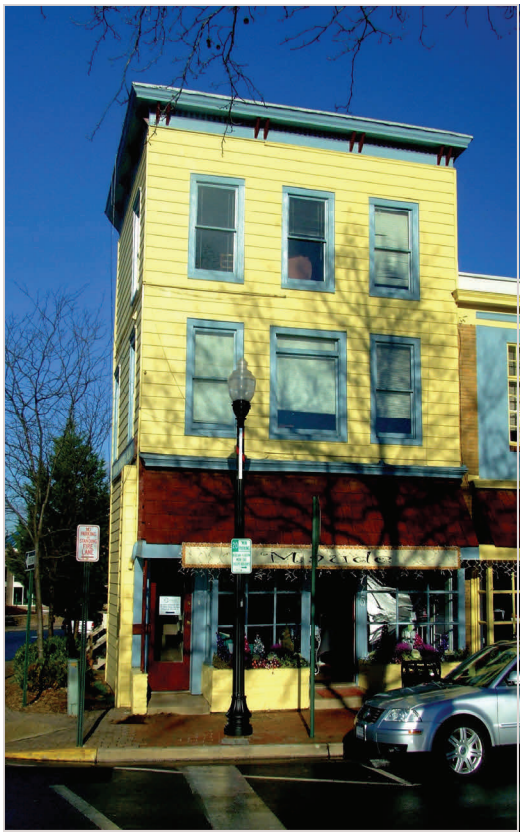
    - Early Colonial and Pennsylvania-German farm buildings, including barns
    - Colonial Inns
    - Early Industrial (1800's—early 1900's) Mills and Factories
    - Victorian and Revival (Colonial, Gothic, Greek, etc.) residential and civic buildings
    - Early to Mid-1900's Craftsman style residential buildings

2. When designing buildings, applicants are encouraged to choose architectural elements from photographs in this guide or collected from their own field surveys within the local area.

Materials

1. Preferred building materials in Lower Salford are:
    - Red brick
    - Local quarried stone and fieldstone
    - White or tan stucco, preferably with brick or stone accents
    - Wood (or similar) clapboard siding, preferably with brick or stone accents
2. Buildings with footprints greater than 8,000 square feet may include stucco (or stucco-like) façade treatment, provided an accent of brick or fieldstone is used. For example, a larger building may have stucco panel walls, provided a stone water-course is included on the bottom 2-3' of every façade.
3. All visible exterior walls should have matching façade treatments.

Examples of Compatible New Buildings



Commercial & Mixed Use Design Guide

Lower Salford Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

PREPARED BY THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
MAY 2012